

The Individual

Published by the Society for Individual Freedom

September 1994

EDITORIAL

Most of this issue is devoted to consideration of the relationship between government and markets. It is possible to distinguish something of a 'spectrum' of attitudes in the sense that, like colours of the spectrum, they merge into each other but are nevertheless clearly distinguishable.

At what we might regard as the extreme red end of this spectrum is the view that it is the government's function to specify practically all aspects of national life, including economic relations such as employment and prices. On this view market mechanisms are an irrelevant nuisance to be suppressed, as far as possible, in favour of 'planning' and central direction.

In the next 'green' band we notice a rather grudging acceptance of the market as a legitimate mechanism for distributing resources 'by permission.' What really matters — usually environment, health, and more environment — has to be decided by government. The market can operate so long as it does not affect these seriously important matters.

One or other of these attitudes has, in fact, been applied during most of history, the basis being theocratic. What 'really mattered' being usually determined by religion; for instance, salvation, grace, spreading the faith by foreign conquest, maintaining 'morality.'

The next, yellow, band is now perhaps the most widely accepted at least by implication. Markets are the best way of producing wealth — something of a reluctant discovery — but governments should have a lot to say about how that wealth is used. This is often called the 'social market economy.'

And finally at the blue end of this attitude spectrum is the view that the economy, and the government, should be market-led. This is because the market is seen, not only as a producer of wealth but also as the means by which individuals relate to find mutually satisfactory expressions of their free will and free choices. The role of government is restricted to providing a legal framework, mostly contract enforcement, and security from violence and fraud.

The 'red' view has now been almost universally rejected. This is mainly because of the failure of the directed economy of the now defunct Soviet Union. It is worth noting that internal dissidence was about the widespread denial of freedom; but it was comparative economic failure which triggered the final popular rejection. Libertarian theorists could, and did, predict such consequences of State direction.

But the faith in magical government powers to conjure up benefits that each individual thinks are 'free,' because they are paid for by someone else, still lingers strongly. For the most part the argument is effectively between the green and yellow camps. Presumably S.I.F. members are mainly in the blue camp and I hope this edition of *The Individual* will help to confirm this position.

The form of government and constitution is also significant, both practically and psychologically in gaining the support of the population. On the assumption that everybody is familiar with the arguments for some sort of republic, the position of the British Monarchy is considered in some detail.

Paul Anderton

PRESERVING THE MONARCHY

by Charles Hendry, M.P. [High Peak, Derbyshire]

Anyone who needs persuasion about the importance of the Monarchy in Britain should pause and give thought to the concept of President Blair. The prospect of Prime Minister Blair is bad enough, but the concept of President Blair being the way in which this country is viewed in the world would be the final signal that we have given up all aspirations to be a world player.

The Monarchy has been central to our political stability for centuries — such that no other country in Europe can rival.

Indeed, one of my abiding memories of coming through the magnificent portals into the Palace of Westminster as an MP for the first time two years ago, was of the incredible strength of that democratic tradition. The place is stuffed full of statues of people who, in their day, were sufficiently famous to merit a statue in Parliament, but today are just a small footnote in history.

Today's Members of Parliament are small cogs in a vast wheel of democratic Government and whatever the imperfections of the current system, we should ask — before we get carried away with the idea of structural reform — why it has served us well.

No democratic leader in the world has amassed the same depth of political understanding as the Queen. Her reign spans over forty years, nine Prime Ministers and four changes of Government — she has seen outcomes from a hung Parliament to Conservative and Labour majorities of over 100.

She receives — and studies — every day a private account of the business in Parliament and through her weekly meetings with the Prime Minister has a deep insight into the affairs of State.

Yet throughout, having seen so many changes, so many complete turnings of the cycle, she has only ever offered guidance — never interference.

The system, for whatever its flaws, works in relative harmony, with a Head of State who genuinely remains above the political fray. And that is something which can be said of few countries with an elected President, where the system itself often institutionalises conflict between the Head of State, the Executive, and the Legislature.

As we reach the end of the century, Britain is adapting to its world role. No longer the Head of an Empire, but still the only country which is on the United Nations Security Council and a member

of NATO, the Commonwealth and the European Union.

As a small country we can still aspire to be a top quality country, with world-beating companies and a democratic tradition which is second to none.

The Monarchy is part of that aspiration. Not as a spectacular money-making machine for Britain (although it is) but as a symbol for all that is best about our way of life.

I understand the decision to take Britannia out of commission, but I regret it. And I hope that, come 1997, a continuing role will be found for Britannia to promote Britain and our companies — and I also hope that a new Royal Yacht will be provided for the Royal family.

We all, also, understand the reason why the Queen volunteered to pay income tax but I, for one, would have readily continued to defend the status quo, keeping the Queen in a position of absolute political neutrality.

Suppose the Queen had been paying income tax in 1979 and there had been a hung Parliament in that election. The Queen would have been forced either to ask Mr Callaghan (with a top rate tax of 98%) to form an administration or Mrs Thatcher (committed to a top rate of tax of 40%). In such a choice no Monarch could both act — and be seen to act — in a way that was wholly impartial, because they would have so much personally at stake.

An elected President can never hope to match the dignity of a Monarch with generations of inherited tradition — where the heir, from birth, is brought up to know his or her responsibilities.

There is no doubt that the Monarchy is under threat, as are many of our national institutions, such as the Church and Parliament, but the republican way is not the way forward for Britain.

Our Head of State remains above politics. Our second Chamber, though unelected, combines the greatest resource of wisdom of any Parliament in the world and acts to improve legislation, rather than challenge its whole basis. Our electoral system has ensured that we have had strong Government, without disproportionate power being given to those smaller parties who just happen to hold the balance of power.

It is a three-legged support that has served us well and we interfere with any of it at our peril.

COMMENT ON THE 'HENDRY VIEW'

by Paul Anderton

A ordinary working man and his family were walking in the countryside for relaxation. They were approached by a keeper with a gun and ordered off the land.

"Why should we leave?" the man asked.

"Because this is the Monarch's land."

"Why?"

"His ancestors fought for it and it's inherited, of course."

"So you fetch the Monarch and I'll fight him for it now. If I win you can order your Monarch off instead of me!"

"Don't be silly," the keeper replied, pointing his gun, "off!"

This story is no doubt apocryphal, but it illustrates an important view of Royalty which is held by a large section of the population and which Charles Hendry ignores.

To many people the privileges of wealth and power that Royalty enjoys seem archaic and unjustified in logic or law. Now the demand is that every political position must somehow be 'democratic' so everybody can feel he has some influence on political decisions.

Even more important perhaps is the widespread perception of the Royal Family as very expensive and not much use. Because of the universal preoccupation with democracy, actual powers are very limited. The significant ones that remain, such as choosing the Prime Minister, are either purely formal, in the sense that they are a foregone conclusion, or only significant in exceptional circumstances such as a hung Parliament.

So to a great many people, not well versed in the subtle and rather obscure benefits that Charles Hendry emphasises, the Monarchy seems an archaic and expensive institution of dubious origin and legitimacy; and of little practical use apart from attracting tourists and providing a useful source of copy for tabloid journalists.

So must we inevitably drift towards a republic, as more people become immune to traditional authority and the attractions of pomp and ceremony? And President Blair (or similar) someday soon?

Not necessarily. But the solution is to build on the advantages of inheritance and experience that Charles Hendry enumerates. Actually strengthen the Monarchy — and that other hotbed of inherited 'privilege' the House of Lords — whilst making both a significant influence in favour of 'the people.'

How? Well, one key function which is taken for granted is the Royal Assent to Acts of Parliament without which they cannot pass into law. This is potentially a last resort stand against bad laws

possibly inspired by panic or purely political manoeuvring of some sort (e.g. Dangerous dogs Act; Maastricht agreement).

With effectively single-chamber government, rapidly being taken over by career politicians with no experience outside politics, the probability of foolish and ill-considered Acts of Parliament with disastrous consequences (intended or unintended) being passed is increasing rapidly.

The present Criminal Justice Bill is a good example. It has (rightly) been modified and mauled by the House of Lords, but the Commons could still insist on restoration of the more undesirable clauses. And the Queen would still 'have' to assent to it even if strong public disquiet developed about it or parts of it.

If the Queen reasserted her right to refuse Royal Assent in such circumstances then she could, in effect, be acting on behalf of the people against some dangerous undermining of principle (such as the withdrawal of the 'right of silence' in the Criminal Justice Bill, for instance).

It would obviously be unacceptable for the Monarch simply to reclaim this right 'out of the blue.' She, and her successors of course, would need 'advising' by some democratically acceptable body.

To avoid the 'Blair clone' career politicians, and tap into a valuable pool of experience and tradition, the obvious source of this body of advisors is the House of Lords. Any Peer — Life or Hereditary — would be eligible for election to a 'Senate' of, say, 20 members of which the Monarch was automatically the President or Chairman. This body would 'advise' the Monarch on constitutional matters, particularly when, if ever, to withhold the Royal Assent to some Bill which had stimulated particularly strong public reaction. Such Bills would then have to be dropped or amended.

Of course, in practice, this would be rarely exercised because 'feedback' through the usual political/media channels would ensure that Bills likely to be 'refused' were not presented. The possibility of refusal would have achieved its purpose behind the scenes.

Such a reform would put both the Monarchy and the House of Lords back in a key constitutional position and ensure their continued existence, with the availability to government and the country of the skills and wisdom Charles Hendry described. And backed up by democratic endorsement

Most important, the Monarchy and Aristocracy would be seen as the defenders of real freedom against the predations of career politicians who are increasingly colonising the House of Commons, particularly on the left.

THE HEALTH SERVICE AS 'TROJAN HORSE'

Walt Hare

The practice of Medicine is, in effect, a government monopoly. This is because to practice any sort of serious medicine a licence from the government is necessary.

The Health Service is financed by the government — that is, compulsorily through taxes — and most of this expenditure goes on staff salaries. Therefore we have a situation where the government (supposedly representing the taxpayers and consumers) is obliged to negotiate with a monopoly supplier of labour which the government itself supports.

Of course the situation is justified on the grounds of protecting 'the public' from exploitation! The exploitation implied, perhaps it should be explained, is from quack and bogus doctors promising cures they could not deliver or which were actually harmful. The system of licensing doctors only after gaining 'recognised' skills (and attitudes, incidentally) developed when customers had to pay doctors directly for their services and advice. Then it was possible to make some sort of case for government protection for perhaps ignorant and simple-minded people who might be easily persuaded to part with their money to silver-tongued self-styled experts promising miracle cures.

Now, after over a hundred years of compulsory education which is supposed to have made everyone capable of informed decisions, such as the performance of governments at election times, it is surely time to reconsider the necessity for this legal protection from exploitation. [In passing, note that the situation is much the same in America — talk of 'privatisation' leading to the American system of so-called Health Care implies the maintenance of the monopoly supply system].

But the commitment to the principle of the Health Service is so deeply rooted now that no politician dare even discuss the notion of fully 'private' health care for fear of instant banishment to oblivion. And the public are quite right to be deeply suspicious of having to pay the market rate for treatment because the market is effectively controlled by the suppliers.

To break the suppliers' stranglehold their monopoly must be removed — in other words anybody should be permitted to charge for medical advice and treatment who can convince customers that their advice is worth paying for. But such a proposal would be met with, if anything, even more incredulity than the idea of 'privatised' monopoly medicine. Since the establishment of their monopoly, the medical professionals have successfully convinced nearly everybody that any disturbance of their monopoly would result in wholesale mayhem as

people rushed to injure and poison themselves in droves.

The rather obvious solution is to confine the requirement for the present qualifications to the Health Service only. Outside it anybody could charge whatever they could get for medical services as with other services. The consumer would therefore have the choice between getting treatment from practitioners, qualified as now, for nothing, or paying for treatment from possibly unqualified practitioners. Presumably, if the qualifications are as important as they are supposed to be, then virtually nobody is going to pay for something they can get free at a higher and guaranteed standard.

One consequence would have to be the removal of the 'prescription only' category of drugs or there would not be much point in allowing anybody to give advice if the advice to take some cures could not be followed because of legal restrictions. [In passing we might notice that the present position in regard to so-called dangerous drugs, heroin, cocaine, cannabis, etc. could still be maintained, even though it is very silly].

The immediate effect of such a reform would be virtually zero. The day after the removal of the medical monopoly everything would be much as it was the day before, when the present restrictions still applied. The existing practising doctors would still have their hard-earned qualifications. Medical schools would still go on teaching in the same way and issuing the same qualifications. But only those wanting work in the National Health Service would actually need a government-endorsed licence. That way the taxpayers would be assured of value for money and (presumably) efficient and safe 'free' treatment. So who could complain about that?

The so-called private sector probably could — and would. This is essentially a section of the monopoly suppliers who are so able (or effective at self-publicity) that they can persuade some of the better-off patients (or hypochondriacs) to pay them for what is supposed to be provided free through taxation. They could very well complain about the possibility of 'unfair competition' from quacks and charlatans without proper qualifications. But no potential patient would in fact be taken in when he/she could get treatment on demand from highly qualified and government-endorsed doctors — free.

So initially, whilst the fresh air of freedom was still confusing and intoxicating, the so-called private sector would no doubt be very anxious to assure customers that its staff were all 'Health Service Trained and Qualified' — as is now taken for granted.

But then as the possibilities opened up by freedom began to be realised there could be significant changes. The poor and 'disadvantaged' might be offered instant high-class private treatment in return for either innovative (experimental) treatment and/or sacrifice of privacy for advertising or promotional services.

And the medical schools might start offering new specialised but limited qualifications. At present all doctors have to get through a wide-ranging course covering, to some extent, all important branches of medicine. This is actually very demanding on time and determination, and certainly contributes to the attitude among doctors of "after all I've been through to get qualified I deserve a lot of money, prestige and political influence."

But does, for instance, a specialist sports doctor require any expertise in gynaecology, obstetrics or paediatrics or forensic pathology? So why not have shorter and cheaper courses for limited medical activities?

Another example is medical assessment for employment or insurance. In these cases the problem

is whether something is wrong not what is wrong. So this is a matter of assessing whether there are significant deviations from 'normal' and diagnostics are hardly relevant, but diagnosis and treatment are a major part of present medical training. Specialists in deciding whether people were 'healthy and probably going to live into the foreseeable future' or not, as the case might be, could perform a lot of routine examinations with much less training and for much lower fees than the present expensively trained doctors.

Forensic pathology is mostly high-grade applied science requiring hardly any skills for dealing with living patients.

A free market would find a lot more examples.

A longer discussion, from a slightly different point of view, by Brian Micklethwait, entitled "How and How Not to Demonopolise Medicine," which to a large extent 'inspired' the above, is available from the Libertarian Alliance, 25, Chapter Chambers, Esterbrooke Street, London, SW1P 4NN, as Political Notes No. 56

FREEDOM IS THE RIGHT TO KNOW

by Peter Jackson

The right to refuse medical treatment is a basic right and a basic freedom. It is lost to a patient when vital information is withheld about a treatment. The information should include the purpose of the treatment, its intended result (notwithstanding that this result might be of limited value only), the possible or probable outcome, and, of major importance, possible side-effects.

There is today wide agreement that the time has come for the principle of Freedom of Information for patients to be informed as stated in the Citizens Charter. Unfortunately the system, and the law, ensure that many facts which could be a matter of life or death only come to light through bitter experience. Any facts about malpractice, in particular, are often difficult to unravel.

Malpractice, whether by medical practitioners, or the result of bureaucratic mismanagement, has been reported with increasing frequency in the media recently. This has culminated in the report by the Health Ombudsman, Mr. William Reid, condemning bosses as 'uncaring' and adding that 'the way some patients are treated is deplorable.' He gave examples such as that of the family of a man who had died after several weeks in hospital, not knowing he had cancer because his consultant had not told the patient, the staff, or his family.

Readers of 'The Individual' will know of a number of cases which have been brought to the

attention of the Society for Individual Freedom where people have spent many years in unsuccessful attempts to discover relevant facts about a medical mishap. In one case a mentally handicapped girl had nine teeth removed contrary to the parents' instructions — and they spent five years in an unsuccessful attempt to find out why.

On the BBC's Radio Programme 'File on 4,' the problems patients encountered when attempting to get satisfaction but eventually having to complain to the General Medical Council (GMC), were well documented. Although the main function of the GMC is purported to be the protection of the public, Meg Stacy^[1] concluded that the pressures on members of the GMC from the profession made them more inclined to favour the profession than the public when deciding disputes.

Jean Robinson, another former lay member of the GMC, also made it clear that she believes the whole disciplinary procedure is weighted against the complainant, who, she said, "must jump a whole series of hurdles." She also said, "The real scandal of the GMC is the tiny, tiny percentage (of complaints) that get through at all. The Preliminary Screener has to decide whether the complaint amounts to serious professional misconduct and is capable of being proven. At this stage all the complainant has got is his story, and neither he, nor the Preliminary Screener,

has any means of carrying out investigations. So really many people are on a hiding to nothing."

The public should be made aware that the GMC is an association basically concerned with protecting its own professionals, as are all similar professional supervisory bodies. The GMC is concerned with 'Serious Professional Misconduct' which it defines as occurring when accepted standards are deliberately flouted. But accepted practices change over time. A fundamental drawback in the system was highlighted by the case of a psychiatrist, Dr. Roderick Frazer, who has a series of convictions involving child pornography, the latest being in April last year. He was not disciplined by the GMC but treated under Health procedures which enabled him to escape facing charge of serious misconduct. Last summer Dr. Frazer applied for the post of local consultant psychiatrist at Southampton Community Health Services Trust. Managers checked his registration with the GMC and employed him. Four weeks later the Chief Executive, Mike Legar, received a call revealing Dr. Frazer's history. References from the GMC had not revealed anything about Dr. Frazer's past. This is one of the convoluted ethical tangles that constantly confronts the GMC. Where a doctor has criminal convictions concerning men, women, or children, he should be excluded from employment in these or similar areas.

There are two overriding elements contained in complaints taken to Health Ombudsmen, NHS Tribunals, the GMC, and the Society for Individual Freedom. These are:—

1. Difficulties encountered in access to information.
2. Complaints concerning alleged malpractice.

MALPRACTICE is rightly the concern of these bodies and of the media, but in truth it is a minor problem compared with that of accepted PRACTICE in areas of scientific uncertainty. That is not to say that cases of malpractice are unimportant, only that they involve relatively few people. In any case, rather than accuse professionals of malpractice we would like to think that many of the mishaps are due to omissions, as opposed to acts of commission, negligence, stupidity, or ignorance.

The main danger to the public is the lack of information about the inherent side-effects of certain treatments. This is especially the case in those areas where a cure is not currently available. When people are unsure of their facts and not in full possession of all relevant scientific information they tend to obfuscate even the few facts they do know. When confidently in possession of relevant information and convincing facts, they are only too eager to make this available to the public.

It also has to be remembered that pharmaceutical companies are commercial enterprises, not philanthropic institutions. For them the necessity of disclosure of information has to be weighed against

commercial viability. This is not to criticise but merely to state a fact. It might well be the reason Giles Radice's Medicines Information Bill was talked out by MPs with drug companies in their constituencies.

Every year in England 75 million prescriptions for tranquillizers are written;^[2] these are drugs to which between one and two million people are addicted.^[3] There are 120,000 treatments by electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) given every year; and perhaps 1,000,000 people are given chemo-therapy and/or radiation therapy.

It is time we asked to know whether anyone taking tranquillizers has been warned that they are addictive, and that these drugs bring about an increase in violence.^[4]

Press comment has emphasised that half the cases of killings by mental patients were committed by those not on their medication and it missed the point that all the mental patients had been on tranquillizers. The known side-effect of causing violence sometimes occurs whilst on the medication and sometimes when coming off it.

The dangers of drugs would of course be minimised if they were given only in proper doses, suited to the individual, and with continuous professional supervision. While a layman might not be able to observe side-effects at an early stage, perhaps a professional could and should.

Also, is the patient or relative warned that this sort of treatment can prove fatal^[5] and that case studies have shown that brain lesions^[6,7] are caused by ECT? These lesions almost certainly lead to an early death after an impaired life for thousands of people every year. Has any one of these patients been told that the only review^[8] of all the 'genuine versus sham' ECT studies concluded that this data, "as a body of evidence, does NOT in the opinion of the authors, significantly indicate that real ECT is more effective than sham ECT in treating depressive illness." Without full public knowledge of the facts and results as known being freely available, how can anyone give 'informed consent'?

A recent survey of people in Surrey showed that while 94% would like to be given all relevant information on the known side-effects if they were prescribed tranquillizers, only 24% of patients had been given any such information at the time they were actually given a prescription, and none had been given the full information about the inherent dangers.

WHAT IS NEEDED

The right to know (or not to know if one wishes) should be enshrined in law. To achieve this:

1. The practitioner should be obliged by law:
 - to make known to the patient or his representative all available information about his

treatment that the practitioner, if he were the patient, would wish to know.

- to include in his notes his professional assessment of the mental state of the patient throughout, and also reasons why a treatment was chosen or withheld. Information withheld should still be recorded in the notes together with the reasons for withholding.

2. The practitioner must also be obliged to report the adverse effects of all new drugs and all controversial treatments or major surgical operations which might come to his knowledge from his own experience.

3. A body of laymen, in place of the GMC, should be given investigatory powers and should ensure that the standards of practice set by the GMC are published and maintained.

4. The same body of laymen should ensure that all available information concerning treatments and their side-effects are made available to the general public.

NOTES and BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Meg Stacey, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Warwick University, served as a lay member of the GMC in the 1980s.

2. Lucy Johnstone, Senior Clinical Psychologist — 'Users and Abusers of Psychiatry' — published by Routledge.

3. National audit of Drug misuse in Britain, 1992 — ISDD.

4. D.G. Workman, MD and D. Cunningham, article in the Canadian Family Physician, Nov. '75 — 'Effects of Psychotropic Drugs on Aggression' — this found an average increase of 360% in aggression after tranquillizers.

5. The Hon. W. S. Maclay, OBE, MD, Presidential address, Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine, Vol 46 — indicated a death rate of 0.06% (As 120,000 ECT treatments are given each year one can assume that one person dies every 5 to 6 days under treatment.)

6. I. M. Allen, New Zealand Medical Journal No. 325 — study on Cerebral lesion from Electric Shock Treatment.

7. Peter Sterling, Associate Professor of Neurology — Testimony on brain damage and memory loss from ECT; prepared for the Standing Committee on Mental Health Assembly of the States of New York, Oct '78.

8. Dr. Graham Sheppard, Consultant Psychiatrist, Ticehurst House Hospital, Dr. Saad K Ahmed, Senior Registrar, Hayes Grove Priory Hospital — A critical review of the controlled 'real versus sham' ECT studies.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Is it criminal simply to be late, to forget, to make a mistake, or to be ignorant? These are all human failings from which none of us is exempt. Whilst we may suffer the consequences of these failings, we would not expect to be prosecuted as criminals. Yet in all too many laws now, many of them passed by this present Government, actions are made obligatory for us, often with deadlines. Failure to act as required, within a time if stated, can make any one of us an inadvertent criminal.

Let me look at ignorance of the law first. It has long been a major tenet of English law that ignorance of the law is no defence. In general, this principle is supportable. If one engages in any activity, one should ensure that one knows the law surrounding that activity before starting. However, so much law has been pouring recently onto the Statute Book that it is almost impossible to keep up to date.

As many people will have learnt from a recent television programme (and as most readers of *The Individual* will already know), much of the present law is badly drafted and its effect ill-thought-out. Even if one takes the trouble to examine the law, one cannot be sure how it will be applied.

At least the House of Lords has done its best to rectify the worst of the legal stupidities. It is a great pity that this worthy House does not have the final say.

To add to the difficulties, H. M. Stationery Office is now charging royalties on the publication by other people of statutes and other 'instruments,' under the Copyright Act of 1988 (see Francis Bennion, *The Times* 26.07.1994). In some instances only HMSO is allowed to be the publisher. This is utterly wrong. The public must have free access to any facet of law which affects them in daily life.

How can anyone now be expected to have full knowledge of the law?

Incidentally, Local Authority Councillors have won a nice little concession for themselves in recent legislation. If they are unaware that their actions are unlawful, they cannot be sued for negligence. Yet they of all people should know the law; they have teams of expensive lawyers constantly advising them.

On the question of mistake, let me instance a case of mis-judgement. A friend recently took over a small café. He is doing badly. He can just tick over if he pays his suppliers, his landlord, and some cash to a few friends who help him for but little reward. He simply cannot afford either the official costs of employing anyone, or the turnover tax of VAT.

The Government has decreed that it must have its share of the non-existent cake before anyone else. My friend may go to jail if he fails the bureaucrats. Yet he will go bankrupt if he pays their arbitrary demands. Simply by making the mistake of becoming an entrepreneur, my friend could be made a criminal.

Prof. Myddelton calls his book on the tax system "The Power to Destroy." How apt this is here.

It worries me that we have now appointed Euro-Politicians who will be fighting for the Social Charter. This will mean that businesses must pay even more to the State before their funds can be used to keep their operations running.

Any of us can be late. Yet, if one fails to render a VAT return on time, dreadful penalties are exacted. Recently a case was reported where an accountant had a heart attack, and the VAT return for one of his clients was not sent in. When the directors of the company realised the position, they immediately put it right. However, Customs & Excise were unyielding; heavy fines were levied. The trouble is that there is almost no appeal against Customs & Excise decisions. Their powers (including powers of arrest and forced entry which are stronger than those of the police) are Draconian in the extreme.

How many people know of the new tax on insurance premiums? This is another piece of rushed, shambolic legislation. It is going to cost the insurance industry millions of pounds to change their computer systems (which Joe Public will pay for), and it is a fair bet that the work will not all be completed in time. The Government has so far not even fully specified the rules. Yet, if the tax is not operated properly, and on time, who may face prosecution? It will not be the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

If I forget to renew the tax disc, the MOT, or the insurance on my car, whatever the reason, I can be in real trouble. I would have little complaint about having to suffer financially for my absent-mindedness. However, mere forgetfulness should not lead to criminal charges, as could so easily happen now.

Let me end with an example of what may be coming to us.

In France, any driver must be able to produce documents on demand. There is no question of taking them to a police station within five days. In Spain, it is similarly obligatory to carry one's identity card at all times, and show it on demand (I wonder how a swimmer copes with this). In both cases an 'officer of the law' has powers of arrest which he may exercise for the offence of non-production.

In the UK, we have a benign police force, at present. It is unthinkable to most people that a policeman would arrest us merely because we had forgotten our documents. Really?

*'The Times' Letters, 13th August 1994

Sir, In parts of the world, one may be arrested for failing to produce papers on demand.

In the UK, we have a benign police force, at present. It is unthinkable to most people that a policeman might arrest us merely because we had forgotten to carry our documents. Let's keep it that way and abandon all ideas of identity cards.

Yours etc.

MICHAEL PLUMBE

(Executive Committee Chairman),
Society for Individual Freedom,
104, Drive mansions, SW6.
August 10.

Michael Plumbe

CONTINENTAL IMPORTS WE CAN DO WITHOUT

1. IDENTITY CARDS.

Our Chairman, Michael Plumbe, has already had one letter about one aspect of identity cards published in *The Times* as shown in his column.

Also of concern is modern technological developments which allow much information to be stored in limited space, such as magnetic strips on credit cards. However, we must take seriously the argument, "if you have nothing to hide what have you to worry about?"

Let us imagine how the full benefits might be exploited to save time, money, and defend freedom and public safety in, say, the year 2010 when the system is fully developed

"Good morning Mr. Wiseman. Before you go to the trouble of filling out the application form and possibly being interviewed for this job, let's just see what we can learn from your identity card.

"So you're Jewish are you? Nothing to worry about there of course. Those awful Nazis a long ago noted that sort of thing I believe, but we are so much nicer now of course, so it doesn't matter

"And you once smoked cannabis as a student? Well, we all know that's not so unusual these days, even U.S. Presidents have done it!

"Once on a 'Peace March'; and an 'Animal Rights' demonstration? They were legal at the time of course, so there is nothing to be ashamed of there at all.

"So, a vigilant customs officer found you had a photograph of your own teenage daughter and her friends doing a bit of nude sunbathing during your family holiday in the South of France last year. As this photograph was not with your other holiday snaps, perhaps you really did think you had something to hide there, mmm?

"Naturally, any one, or even two, of these, er, activities are nothing to bother about ... but all together — well, I wouldn't bother with the application form after all. I'm sure you understand that the post of Home Office lavatory cleaner is very sensitive. Some of the most important people in the land are there every day and you could overhear very sensitive information. So we have to ensure the utmost reliability. Thanks for calling. Have a nice day."

There are many things that not only are, but very definitely should, be kept away from possible access by the government or its officials. Many activities and opinions that one might very legitimately be proud of are not for government knowledge, particularly in combination. Moral panics, propaganda campaigns, and deliberate misinformation can, and often do, induce beliefs which are quite unjustified and seen to be so in the fullness of time. But before then can cause much pain and havoc to innocent citizens.

There is, however, one possible benefit which members might like to propose to their MPs and anyone else who might be interested. As the major benefit of identity cards is supposed to be improved law enforcement, reduced (or eliminated) social security fraud, and general easing of many other government functions, it follows that the work of the police, customs, social security fraud investigators, and other public servants concerned with the protection of us free citizens will be much easier. So what about, say, a 10% reduction in the pay of these officials on the introduction of identity cards? As their work will be so much easier, surely that is only reasonable?

2. STATUTORY CHAMBERS AND COMPULSORY BUSINESS REGISTRATION.

In the other 11 EEC countries there is a system of Statutory Business Registration. This means that no business can be started without first being 'Registered' with some official body — in general something like a nationalised Chamber of Commerce.

This means government has only one organisation representing businesses (large and small) to deal with. That makes life much easier for government Ministers and officials than having to deal with several business organisations, as in Britain. Collecting statistics, for instance, would be easier.

But there is a much darker side. Elsewhere in Europe, before someone can set up in business, they must first obtain a licence from the Statutory Chamber of Commerce/Craft — paying the appropriate fee, of course. This body can refuse registration on account of its considering that there are already too many similar businesses in the area.

There was a well publicised case of a British building company going over to France, shortly after trade barriers came down in the EEC over a year ago, to do some tarmac work. Their lorry was seized by the French police and the workmen arrested. You see, they were not members of the local Chamber of Commerce! Protectionism by any other name

It is apparently seriously suggested that some compulsory business registration scheme should be introduced in Britain. This is surely unacceptable. It is not a price worth paying for making government easier. Much better for the government to reduce or abandon some of its regulatory and information-

collecting activities and leave economic adjustments to market mechanisms.

More information and detailed pamphlets on this subject can be obtained from:

The Federation of Small Businesses [FSB],
Chairman, John Harris
32, St. Anne's Road,
Lytham St. Anne's,
Lancashire, FY8 1NY.

"The FSB believes that mandatory membership of Chambers of Commerce and Craft Chambers, as practised in some member states (of the EEC), removes one of the fundamental principles of a free market economy and democratic society, being completely contrary to the principle of freedom of choice. The FSB supports a diverse grouping of business representation to achieve the widest possible forum, and opposes any form of statutory chambers or statutory licensing."

The Editor

CHOICE IN PERSONAL SAFETY

Road safety is a good example of the Whitehall 'must do something' syndrome and its consequences. Anti-smoking is another one, mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

The development of these campaigns has a certain predictability because they have much in common.

First some 'problem' is identified by a government department often in response to a media 'hype' which has latched on to some specially dramatic event. In the case of roads, a spectacular accident in most unusual circumstances is the usual focus for 'hype' and 'demands for action.'

'Concern' about the supposed problem is expressed in Parliament and quite likely the Opposition takes the opportunity to accuse the government in general and the Minister responsible in particular of complacency and lack of care over the 'problem.' Alternatively the Minister himself/herself identifies the 'problem,' very likely in a Conference speech intended to stimulate applause and justify more spending of taxpayers' money by the department.

Then come the discussions, enquiries, invitations to comment, and so on with an eventual report or 'Green Paper' heavily biased in favour of the original intention and with any contrary views either ignored completely or dismissed as 'minority.'

The first major campaign for restrictions on so-called safety grounds was for the universal speed limit. A Green paper was produced called "How Fast" which was pure biased propaganda and

contained a wide selection of standard devices for concentrating and guiding attention to the required conclusion. Typically, selecting figures for impression by giving percentages in some cases and original data in others (properly presented reports should give both in every case together with sources); and failure to consider alternative explanations such as in the assertion that strict enforcement of a 30mph limit had reduced accidents significantly — perhaps it was the increased police activity associated with enforcement that reduced accidents? As a teacher of statistical analysis, I used this pamphlet for years as a source of bad examples.

Then there was an 'experiment' with the 70mph limit on motorways. During this time lorries were banned from the outside lane. As running into the back of slow lorries in the outside lane was the most frequent 'speed' accident, this should have completely invalidated the supposed experiment. But the results, which were in fact statistically inconclusive, were pronounced as justifying making the limit permanent. And this was endorsed by a so-called advisory committee from which several members were absent, including the famous racing driver Sterling Moss, and who had **not** been informed of the nature of the key decision to be taken.

So the idea that a speed limit on motorways was essential for safety passed into standard folklore and we now have at least two generations of motorists who accept it, even though the actual evidence for it was massaged and manipulated to get a preselected result and even then was dubious. There is a deafening silence about the accident rate on German motorways where there is still no speed limit.

The next target was compulsory seat belts. This was again the subject of selective evidence and supported by dubious research.

This has been studied in detail by C.I.P.S. (Choice In Personal Safety) who ask whether you dislike or question the value of seatbelt compulsion. Many do but won't say publicly, so you are not alone.

Government employed 'experts' and grant-funded university professors are almost all in favour of belt compulsion. Not surprising that, because they are unlikely to get more funding by opposing the dogma of their Department of Transport paymasters. The experts and media rarely quote the full facts, such as

1. In an independent analysis of eight European countries it was found that nowhere had belt compulsion reduced deaths and injuries [TNO Institute, Holland, 1989]

2. The initial statistical study in Victoria State, Australia, where belt compulsion first started, is seriously flawed.

3. The C.I.P.S. has a provable 4-page list of people killed and injured by their belts in ways that wouldn't have happened if they had not been belted.

4. Most car fires are not after crashes, but most car fire casualties are in post-crash fires. Tests show

that, at best, the time to get out of a car is increased by one-third if a belt is used. Post-crash car fire deaths have increased since belt compulsion.

5. Airbags are proven to be better and safer. But, the Department of Transport will not consider them as a better alternative. Airbags make belts obsolete. So it seems we are stuck with belts in cars (which when not in use are an untidy nuisance) simply because senior Civil Servants won't admit they were wrong.

More details and a regular newsletter can be obtained from C.I.P.S., Fir Tree Cottage, Lower Chase Road, Waltham Chase, Southampton, SO3 2LH.

Peter Raymond

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY — A GOOD IDEA SPOILT

By raising money from individuals inclined to gamble, the government avoids the moral objections to taxation. Whereas taxation is coercive, betting is voluntary. The amount spent is controlled by the 'investor' rather than the government. If greed is a sin then exploiting it for the public good should surely be encouraged. Possibly even more important there is no need for government inspectors and spies to enforce payment — people actually queue up to buy tickets!

In fact it looks as if an enlarged and expanded lottery would be an excellent way of raising **all** money for government expenditure. This is impractical only because government expenditure is such an enormous burden. At 42% of GNP, and assuming only a one-third payback for prizes, it would require an average expenditure of around 60% of income from each present taxpayer. Even though everybody would have a lot more to spend because they would not be paying income tax, excise duties, or VAT, such a high level implies 'gambling fever' of very improbable intensity.

But surely every pound raised by the National Lottery should be matched by a pound reduction in taxation. It seems the present scheme is to use lottery money as extra to taxation. The excuse for this is supposed to be supporting 'good causes' — mostly Arts and Sport. Yet such good causes have been subsidised from taxation before, and the money in fact distributed on the basis of who could achieve most favourable publicity or who had the most politically attractive 'image.'

S.I.F. members might well think the best way of supporting Arts and Sport is to leave the money spent on subsidies in the taxpayer's pocket so that taxpayers can decide for themselves what artistic or sporting activities they wish to support by direct market

participation. As it is, the proposed national lottery money will merely be an addition to the subsidies which are, in effect, distributed through establishment channels and old-boy networks. The beneficiaries of subsidised activities are largely already well-off people who attend prestigious taxpayer-supported performances.

How much better to promise and deliver, say 2.5% off VAT, if enough could be raised from the National Lottery to replace that amount of tax (approx. £5 billion)?

Walt Hare

THE 'DRUG PROBLEM'

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is on a tour of South American drug-producing countries — Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru. The government evidently regards the 'drug problem' as of similar significance to terrorism as a threat to civilisation. Civilisation has in fact palpably broken down in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Middle East, and the common factor there seems to be religion!

Nevertheless, the Home Secretary is evidently intending to reinforce the absurd and confused situation with regard to so-called 'dangerous drugs.' Practically all supposed knowledge of drugs is based on myth, innuendo, and political/media 'hype'. The result is a policy supported mainly by its own existence and the fact that for professional or political reasons few dare question it.

American domestic politics of race and inter-professional squabbling are the historical origins of the 'problem.' America has effectively led the rest of the world by the nose in order to claim international support for its domestic policies. The Americans attacked opium to discredit Chinese immigrants, cocaine to discredit Negroes, and marijuana to discredit Mexicans. So the American government is saddled with a vast law-enforcement and medical vested-interest situation which it dare not abandon without admitting to nearly a century of mistakes and often blatant public misrepresentation and political opportunism.

The original pressure for the control of morphia and heroin came from the battle between American pharmacists and doctors for the fees expected from the widespread use of these amazingly effective pain-relieving drugs which followed the invention of the hypodermic needle. As is usual for disreputable political manoeuvres, the 'justification' by both professionals and politicians was supposedly altruistic. Unfortunately the rest of us, enthusiastically encouraged by the sensation-peddling media, have largely fallen for this propaganda. The result has been drug laws and totally dishonest 'justifications' for them which intrude seriously on personal freedom.

Even more importantly the existence of such laws lends credence to the notion that it is the government's business, and competence, to determine some sort of abstract good that individuals are unable to determine for themselves.

The root of the supposed altruistic justification for suppression is the notion of addiction. This is supposed to be such a serious and uncontrollable condition that practically any draconian measure is justified in avoiding or curing it whether desired by supposed sufferers or not.

In fact, of course, behaviour essentially indistinguishable from addiction to 'dangerous drugs' can be, and often is, displayed in relation to many other substances and situations such as alcohol, food, work, slimming, gambling. The massive non sequitur of addiction to so-called dangerous drugs being uncontrollable, whilst judges make treatment to be 'cured' a condition for lenient sentences for some addict/suppliers, goes completely unnoticed by media or politicians.

In practice the 'treatment' is some variation of that developed by Alcoholics Anonymous. Even a cursory study of such treatment reveals that the real attention is directed to personal psychological or social problems with drug use as a byproduct of these individual problems. It is also obvious to the unprejudiced observer that such individual problems are, if not inevitably 'caused,' at least exacerbated by 'deprivation' — the euphemism for conditions which are the consequence of government attempts to solve social problems by unsuitable rehousing or subsidies to failed industries. The victims of this social engineering are probably correct in seeking some sort of escape in drugs rather than salvation in political promises and schemes for social regeneration.

Instead of public anger being directed at failed political promises we have been taken in by the propaganda against drug suppliers. These are the modern versions of medieval devils and witches, or the 'Jewish financiers' of Nazi Germany. These were also credited with magical powers to corrupt and destroy in spite of the enlightened wisdom of government advice.

There is, in effect, a tacit conspiracy between politicians, professionals, and media, to promote the notion of helpless victims of some mysterious evil force rather than informed individuals exercising free choice on drug use.

The politicians are grateful for some scare to make people think their repressive laws are needed for protection; the professionals get more and more taxpayers' money to solve problems they invented themselves; and the media are ever anxious for shock-horror stories to fill in on a quiet news day and provide a source of ready-made evil characters for lazy dramatists to exploit. Consequently anybody without personal knowledge is bombarded with images of death and degradation 'caused by' drugs

with pushers and drug barons apparently able to achieve feats of persuasion and marketing which would be the envy of any respectable (?) business tycoon, politician, or religious leader.

A far more coherent explanation is that any drug 'misuse' is 'caused by' failed attempts by governments doling out taxpayers' money on grandiose schemes of social engineering. That is why 'drug problems' are most prevalent in deprived areas — concentrations of problems that were supposed to be cured by education and social security schemes.

There are now some signs that the futility of drug control is being recognised. A publication by the prestigious Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) recommends that cannabis, heroin and cocaine should be commercially available and so subject to trading standards and (of course!) taxation [*Winning the War on Drugs*, by Dr. Richard Stevenson]. This is certainly progress of sorts even though the IEA felt obliged to include a section justifying the present position.

The trouble is that most of the pressure for legalisation comes from the use of arguments of the type: the present laws have failed to curb use of 'dangerous drugs' and have produced disastrous side effects in the form of criminal empires and widespread corruption, therefore we must legalise in order to regain control and eliminate the profits of 'criminals.'

It is important **not** to latch onto this sort of argument even though, being eminently 'pragmatic,' it is the only one likely to carry any political weight (particularly the prospect of another pleasure to tax!). It still leaves intact the notion that it is somehow the business of law and government to interfere in individual decisions on the grounds of superior wisdom or the vague catch-all 'good of society.'

Laws against drug use and supply should be repealed because they were a mistake and an unjustified intrusion on individual decision in the first place. Their repeal must be seen as the correction of an error, not another trick or opportunity to influence and manipulate individual choice. And a notable triumph of the market as an expression of freedom of choice as well as 'wealth creation.'

Paul Anderton

[Apart from works specifically drawing attention to instances of gerrymandering such as Szasz's "Ceremonial Chemistry" (Routledge) the history indicated above can be deduced from 'reading between the lines' of ostensibly non-polemical works such as D. F. Musto's "The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control." Similarly for the truth about addiction. For instance the twelve steps recovery programme, developed originally by Alcoholics Anonymous, includes steps [4] 'Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves'

or [8] 'Make a list of all persons we had harmed and become willing to make amends to them all.' This clearly indicates the importance of the addict realising and correcting his own personality shortcomings — in other words that the addiction is due to his personality rather than the properties of any particular substance. Unfortunately media attention and comments concentrate exclusively on the first step — '... admit we are powerless over alcohol (drugs) — that our life had become unmanageable.' This is merely admitting a problem. The same applies to gambling, for instance, where no substance is involved.]

THE USE OF DRUGS IN SPORT

It seems that everybody concerned with sport considers that the use of any sort of drugs to improve performance is seriously 'cheating'. Some might disagree but so long as they are a small minority it doesn't matter as the question is not an 'objective' one. Sport is an activity depending on mutual agreement and cooperation so what participants believe about it is all that matters, not whether such beliefs are justified in any objective sense.

So what is to be done about drug use? The present system is a typical product of the bureaucratic capture of rationality by both the government and sports authorities.

In the first place to try to pretend, as under the present system, that certain events did not occur when they obviously did is highly presumptuous. If a human being runs at a certain measured speed, or throws a weight a certain distance, then surely that is a fact which should be taken account of, however it was achieved. If the performer is found to have been taking drugs his/her performance is now simply ignored.

If the government and sports authorities were not mesmerised by their obsession with control and punishment, the solution would be obvious. Maintain **two** official lists of records and championships, one for 'natural' performers and one for 'drug-assisted' performers.

Then the situation would soon become self-correcting instead of a self-perpetuating battle of wits between athletes and enforcers.

This because, whilst drugs are perceived as cheating, nobody would want to be on the 'drug assisted' list. It would consist only of athletes who had been caught out and transferred to it, and those few who defiantly considered drug use legitimate (mostly strength athletes such as weightlifters, shotputters, etc.).

But there would be hardly any money in being on the drug assisted list either. Whilst spectators and

supporters (including media) consider drug use cheating there would be no interest in the drug assisted performers, and they would not get any sponsorship or advertising contracts.

Also the athletes themselves would be keen to see their colleagues on the correct list. This would not be 'sneaky' — just making sure everybody was on the right list! Instead of desperately trying to get away with occasional 'cheating' athletes would be touchingly anxious to prove they were drug-free and 'natural'.

Walt Hare

BOOKS

PASSIVE SMOKING, SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND CORRUPTED SCIENCE

Professor Antony Flew

A short but intense and thorough analysis of the methods used to 'hype up' the supposed dangers of passive smoking. The use of dubious evidence and pseudo-scientific argument is rife in this area, and the methods considered here are a useful warning about what to look out for when government and government-financed institutions get the urge to reform and rescue the rest of us from ourselves and other people's pleasures.

Professor Flew argues that the recent American Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Report is a classic example of "corrupted and politicised science." The EPA has a history of scandal and mistakes that Europeans are not aware of, and its own Science Advisory Board described its assessments as, "largely speculative, incomplete, and heavily dependent on studies of dubious validity." Yet the British government accepts the EPA's claims about passive smoking as a basis for policy regarding smoking in public. Professor Flew calls for an official inquiry to reconsider government policy in the light of an objective consideration of all the evidence.

In the wider sense the significance of studies such as this is as a warning of the potential misuse of science as a propaganda tool for dubious policies governments have adopted — most likely for the purpose of being seen to be 'doing something' about some supposed problem. Once the 'something' starts being done and the propaganda/public relations 'hype' bandwagon is rolling, objective reassessment becomes very unwelcome.

The propaganda about passive smoking was a vital weapon "to undermine principled libertarian opposition" to the anti-smoking campaign, by shifting

the debate from self-imposed risks to risks allegedly inflicted on others. This is the sort of trick we must be particularly vigilant about.

In order to maintain the credibility of genuine and properly applied science, Professor Flew's paper should be compulsory reading for all science teachers. Then they might be inclined to warn their pupils about being taken in by pseudo-science, particularly when endorsed by supposedly prestigious government-financed departments and institutions.

Paul Anderton

[23pp, price £2.50 from *Forest*, 2, Grosvenor Gardens, SW1W ODH]

THE POWER TO DESTROY

Professor D.R. Myddelton

'The Power to Destroy' shows how extensively taxes reduce the freedom of the individual and harm the free-market economy. Professor Myddelton considers in detail the arguments for progressive taxation and capital tax and convincingly disposes of them on both logical and economic grounds. This is well worth careful study.

The inevitable conclusion is that a drastic reduction in government spending is essential for meaningful economic and social improvement.

On the practical application of his conclusions, Professor Myddelton makes important proposals to simplify the tax system, reduce the burden on individuals and companies, improve the incentive to create wealth, cut government spending, and substantially reduce the proportion of the national income which the government confiscates by taxation.

Peter Raymond

[Paperback £6.95; hardback £9.95, post-free. From Society for Individual Freedom, 104 Drive Mansions, London SW6 5JH]

THE MAD OFFICIALS

Christopher Booker and Richard North

Readers of the Sunday Telegraph will be familiar with Christopher Booker's articles on bureaucracy-gone-mad. *The Mad Officials* is a collection of such stories. For anyone concerned with Freedom this book is also compulsory reading. However, it is not a book to be read steadily from cover to cover. Each tale is so infuriating that one has to stop and recover one's composure before proceeding to the next. For example:

- Summonses were issued against residents in Fulham for leaving rubbish out for collection on their usual day when the Council had changed to the next day because of a bank holiday.

- A Fire Officer decreed that an open tent (no walls), erected for a garden fête, needed fire doors.

- The staircase in a converted barn was deemed too steep. So the owners made it even steeper which made it a ladder. This was acceptable.

- The operators of a restored paddle-boat were ordered to install safety bulkheads in such a way that the paddles could no longer be driven.

And so on and so on.

A 'society benefactor' has already bought copies of this book and sent one to each MP. Now, buy a copy for yourself and see what stupidities are being inflicted on us. Then protest to your MP (or MEP, if you know who he or she is) when you hear of similar nonsense.

Michael Plumbe

[Constable, £7.95, from bookshops; or from the Sunday Telegraph — add £1 for p. & p.]

A HALF AND HALF AFFAIR

Professor D. R. Denman, FRICS

Author is Emeritus Professor of Land Economy, University of Cambridge and an acknowledged authority and lifelong champion of private property and the unfettered market. In these remarkable memoirs he describes his struggles with political and academic forces of collectivism and socialist thought over a lifetime. The moving life story of the personal tribulations and ultimate intellectual triumph of a good and many-faceted man — old-fashioned liberal, devout Christian and waggish iconoclast. Highly commended.

Lord Monson

[£16.50, 360pp, Churchill Press, from RICS books Surveyor Court, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JE Proceeds to RICS benevolent fund.]

TREASON AT MAASTRICHT: The Destruction of the British Constitution

Rodney Atkinson and Norris McWhirter

The authors vigorously describe the origins and nature of the Treaty on European Union, and they point out the serious and worrying consequences for the British constitution. More polemically, they accuse the European Union of having Nazi origins,

and describe what they call the 'Euro-fascists' in Brussels and London. If they push this argument a little far, they nevertheless draw attention to some uncomfortable facts.

The book appears to have been produced over-hastily, and it is occasionally repetitive. Poor editing or slapdash proof-reading have left it marred by many small but distracting typographical mistakes. Any spelling checker would have found at least some of the more obvious errors (such as 'layed,' 'Lordsbips,' 'ourfscal' and 'Comununity').

The authors point out that the Treaty of Maastricht is contrary to the Act of Union of England and Scotland, but they fail to mention that this Act had already been broken (albeit in smaller ways) but — and here lies a defect — it provides no remedy.

The issues raised in this book are of great importance to the future of Britain and deserve to be thought about and discussed up and down the country.

RBC

[Hardback £6.95, paperback £3.50, post-free from Compuprint Publishing, 1 Sands Road, Swalwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE16 3DJ]

WORKS NOT REVIEWED BUT PROBABLY OF INTEREST

The Editor would be pleased to receive reviews from readers of these or other works of interest. *Comments here are based on publishers' material.*

EUROPE AT RISK: BUREAUCRATIC BETRAYAL OF THE EUROPEAN IDEAL

Dr. Tim Evans and Russell Lewis

[£10.00, 35pp, Adam Smith Institute]

An incisive analysis of the betrayal of the originally free market orientation of the Treaty of Rome. The book outlines (with examples of the more bizarrely amusing cases) the growth of bureaucratic and corporatist interventionism, and the role of social paternalism and health fascism in spearheading that interventionism.

BAD GIRLS AND DIRTY PICTURES: the challenge to reclaim feminism

Edited by Alison Assiter and Avedon Carol

[£9.95, 185pp, Pluto Press]

A brilliant collection of essays by supporters of Feminists Against Censorship which demolishes the half-baked analysis and phony science used by some 'feminists' to justify reactionary anti-sex and pro-censorship puritanism. Clearly written, it examines the flaws in the research that purports to prove that 'porn' has harmful effects, and demonstrates that the

pro-censorship feminists have abandoned the real goals of the liberation of women.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ALPHABET

Russell Lewis

[£10.00, 44pp, Adam Smith Institute]

A persuasive and often amusing reference work that includes entries from Acid Rain to Three Mile Island, Biodiversity to Overpopulation, Jaffa Oranges to Smoking, Hazardous Chemicals to Suppression of Data, showing that the truth is precisely the reverse of the claims being made by so-called "Environmentalists."

ALTERED STATES: POST-MODERNISM, POLITICS AND CULTURE

Edited by Mark Perryman

[12.99, 285pp, Lawrence and Wishart]

A mostly leftist collection of essays on "postmodern political culture" giving some insight into the "Democratic Left" school of 'thought'. Contains an essay by Marc-Henri Glendening (a noted libertarian writer) "Towards a Post-modern Conservatism" applying the "New Times," "Post Fordist" concepts to an analysis of the prospects for liberty.

NOTICES

1. MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

Wednesday 21st September 1994 at the Red Lion, Parliament Street, London SW1. 6.45pm for 7.00pm. Discussion meeting on freedom issues.

Members are invited to bring guests along to a discussion of Freedom Issues of interest to the Society. The format will be three 10-minute talks on specific subjects and each followed by questions and discussion. For further details see page 16.

9th November 1994, Red Lion, Parliament Street, London, for 6.30pm. Maurice Frankel of the Campaign for Freedom of Information will speak to the S.I.F. about freedom of information issues.

2. DONATION

The Society gratefully acknowledges a donation of £1000 from a member who wishes to remain anonymous for the time being.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS

Members will be pleased to learn that the British Section of The International Society for Human Rights has opened an office of its International Secretariat in London, manned by Glen Calderwood Secretary-General of ISHR (British Section).

The address is 27, Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3XX. Any members or friends

interested in the work of ISHR are welcome to get in touch and we hope to include more information on this organisation in future issues of *The Individual*.

4. CONSERVATIVE PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCE, BOURNEMOUTH

The S.I.F. and Campaign for Freedom of Information are sponsoring a joint Fringe Meeting at the Conservative Conference. The subject is the need for more-open government. Exact programme is not yet finalised, but at least one MP has agreed to speak. There will be free refreshments available. The time booked is 6.00-8.00pm, Wednesday, 12th October, at The Lampeter Hotel, Exeter Park Road, Bournemouth, BH2 5AY, which is only about 200 metres from the main BIC Conference building. This is outside the security area so it is not necessary to have a Conference pass to attend, and any members living in or near Bournemouth will be most welcome. If you are attending the Conference, please note this Fringe Meeting now.

Prof. D. R. Myddelton's book, "The Power to Destroy," will be on sale together with various other works on freedom issues, and we hope to recruit new members.

5. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER SOCIETIES, ETC.

The Anti-Maastricht Alliance has held a series of talks and meetings at the Red Lion, Parliament Street. All on Wednesdays. Those still to take place are:

Sept 14th: "The Break-up of the Soviet Union and its effect on the EU" by Mark Almond, Lecturer in Modern History, University of Oxford

Oct 12th: "The constitutional Implications of 1996" by Michael Shrimpton, barrister and author.

Nov. 16th: "Euro-treason and Celtic Treason" by Prof. Christie Davies, Professor of Sociology, University of Reading.

Dec. 14th: "Do we still need a written constitution?" by Caroline Ellis, Political Officer, Charter 88.

All start at 7.00pm and end at approx 8.30, after a discussion. Further information from Dr Helen Szamuely — phone/fax: 081 740 7194.

The Apprentice Boys of Derry, City of Westminster Branch, are holding a one-day open conference "Let Ulster Speak" on Saturday, 5th November 1994, 11am-6pm, Jubilee Room, New Cavendish Club, 44, Great Cumberland Place, W1 (Near Marble Arch).

Speakers include: Rt. Hon. J. Enoch Powell; Nicholas Budgen, MP; Kate Hoey, MP; Barry Porter, MP; David Trimble, MP; and David Burnside (PR specialist). Admission by advance purchased tickets only, price £7.50 by cheque to "Westminster Campsie Club" from S.P. McIlwaine, 18 Dunsbury Close, Sutton, Surrey SM2 6TP.

Meetings of the Society

DISCUSSION ON FREEDOM ISSUES

Wednesday **21st September** 1994 at the Red Lion, Parliament Street, London SW1, at 6.45pm for 7.00pm. Members are invited to bring guests along to a discussion of freedom issues of interest to the Society.

The format will be three 10-minute talks, each on a specific subject and each followed by questions and discussion. Subjects will be agreed by a subcommittee. Members wishing to speak should submit their subject, summarised in not more than fifty (50) words, by 16th September, to Peter Jackson, 8, Michael Fields, Forest Row, East Sussex, RH18 5BH.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

On **9th November** 1994, at the Red Lion, Parliament Street, London SW1, 6.30pm. Maurice Frankel of the Campaign for Freedom of Information will speak to the S.I.F. about freedom-of-information issues.

The Power to Destroy

THE POWER TO DESTROY: a study of the British tax system, by D.R. Myddelton, is a devastating analysis of how taxes reduce the freedom of the individual and the creation of wealth. Published this year, it offers radical proposals to reduce taxation and public expenditure so as to increase freedom, wealth and welfare.

"I strongly commend Professor Myddelton's stimulating review of the continuing, widely damaging cost of government as the starting-point of a long-overdue national debate on the urgent need to restore wealth-creation above sterile 'redistribution' as the only lasting remedy for the most pressing economic, as well as social, problems." *Lord Harris of High Cross.*

"In 1950 as an average taxpayer you worked for two and a half weeks each year to pay your income tax. Today it is two and a half months. That's called progressive taxation. David Myddelton shows just how damaging the tax structure is to our economy: stifling incentive and growth; channelling our money into all the wrong things. This book should be read by everyone who has received either a pay slip or a tax demand and fumed about the amount being grabbed by the taxman." *Teresa Gorman MP.*

The 112-page book carries a foreword by our President, Lord Monson, and is written in a clear and witty style. It is completed with notes, references, a name index and a subject index. The hardback version is £9.95 a copy, while the paperback is £6.95 a copy, post-free from the Society for Individual Freedom at the address given below.

The Individual

Views expressed in *The Individual* are not necessarily those of the editor or of the Society but are printed as a contribution to debate. This issue follows that of May. Letters are welcome, as are articles. All contributions should be sent to the editor: Paul Anderton, 15 Norfolk Park Drive, Sheffield S2 3QG.

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